IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A video encoding apparatus ~~of Claim 1~~ comprising:

a picture memory for holding inputted pictures;

a reference time generation means for generating time information to be a reference;

a picture input means for writing an inputted picture into a designated address in the picture memory;

an input time recording means for recording (a) a time that is outputted from the reference time generation means when a picture is inputted to the picture input means, and (b) an address in the picture memory where the inputted picture is written, such that the time is associated with the address;

an encoding means for encoding data in a designated address in the picture memory;

a picture memory designation means for designating addresses in the picture memory which are targeted for processing, and for indicating the addresses to the picture

input means and the encoding means, respectively, on the basis of the information recorded by the input time recording means, and for stopping data input until a writable memory area is secured, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded when designating addresses for the picture input means

~~wherein, when the picture memory designation means designates a position in the picture memory for the picture input means, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded, the picture memory designation means stops data input until a writable memory area is secured~~.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A video encoding apparatus ~~of Claim 1~~ comprising:

a picture memory for holding inputted pictures;

a reference time generation means for generating time information to be a reference;

a picture input means for writing an inputted picture into a designated address in the picture memory;

an input time recording means for recording (a) a time that is outputted from the reference time generation means when a

picture is inputted to the picture input means, and (b) an address in the picture memory where the inputted picture is written, such that the time is associated with the address;

an encoding means for encoding data in a designated address in the picture memory;

a picture memory designation means for designating addresses in the picture memory which are targeted for processing, and indicating the addresses to the picture input means and the encoding means, respectively, on the basis of the information recorded by the input time recording means, and for designating a position corresponding to the latest time, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded when designating addresses for the picture input means

~~wherein, when the picture memory designation means designates a position in the picture memory for the picture input means, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded, the picture memory designation means designates a position corresponding to the last time~~.

5.-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A video encoding method ~~of Claim 5,~~ employing a picture memory for performing reordering of pictures for predictive coding, said method comprising:

writing an inputted picture into a designated address in a picture memory;

recording a time at which the picture is inputted, and the address in the picture memory where the inputted picture is written, such that the time is associated with the position;

designating addresses in the picture memory which are targeted for processing in said writing an inputted picture and an encoding step, respectively, on the basis of the information recorded in the input time recording step;

encoding data in a designated address in the picture memory; and

~~the picture memory designation step includes a step of~~ stopping data input until a writable memory area is secured, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded when designating ~~a position in the picture memory in~~ addresses for the picture inputting step.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A video encoding method ~~of Claim 5,~~ employing a picture memory for performing reordering of pictures for predictive coding, said method comprising:

writing an inputted picture into a designated address in a picture memory;

recording a time at which the picture is inputted, and the address in the picture memory where the inputted picture is written, such that the time is associated with the position;

designating addresses in the picture memory which are targeted for processing in said writing an inputted picture and an encoding step, respectively, on the basis of the information recorded in the input time recording step;

encoding data in a designated address in the picture memory; and ~~wherein the picture memory designation step includes a step of~~

designating ~~a position~~ an address in the picture memory, which ~~position~~ address corresponds to ~~the~~ a latest time, if data in the picture memory has not yet been encoded when designating

~~a position in the picture memory~~ addresses in the picture inputting step.

9. (Currently Amended) A frame rate conversion apparatus comprising:

plural frame memories for holding inputted pictures;

a reference time generation means for generating a reference ~~time information to be a reference;~~ time;

a picture input means for writing an inputted picture into a designated address in a frame memory;

an input time recording means for recording (a) a time which is outputted from the reference time generation means when a picture is inputted to the picture input means, and (b) an address in the frame memory where the inputted picture is written;

an encoding cycle setting means for outputting an encoding cycle setting signal which designates an encoding cycle;

an encoding means for encoding data in a designated address in the frame memory; and

a picture memory designation means for designating addresses in the frame memory which are targeted for processing, and indicating the addresses to the picture input means and the encoding means, respectively, on the basis of the information recorded by the input time recording means, and the encoding cycle setting signal outputted from the encoding cycle setting means.